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Wesley's Limited Alliance with Lockean Empiricism¹

Kevin Twain Lowery

The epistemology of John Wesley is generally characterized by his famous quadrilateral: scripture, reason, tradition, and experience. Scripture is given the place of primacy, and its interpretation is secured through the balanced use of the latter three facets. However, Wesley's epistemology is much more philosophically conditioned than one might realize, for underlying these four pillars is a foundation of empiricism, one that begins with, but eventually departs from, John Locke.

Locke's empiricism emerged at the close of the seventeenth century and became a major intellectual force among many of Wesley's contemporaries in eighteenth-century England. Accepting the Lockean system required one to reject certain elements of both Aristotelianism and medieval scholasticism, which used Aristotle as a base. Although he expressed some agreement with Locke's assertions, Wesley remained committed to the Aristotelian schema. Not only does this locate him outside of the mainstream of his time, it creates some difficulties for his epistemology and for the doctrines which depend on it.

In this paper I will attempt to sketch Wesley's relation to Lockean empiricism by identifying the key issues that seem to spark his objections to Locke's *Essay*. The purpose is not to evaluate the validity of Locke's positions *per se*. Rather, I hope to locate the theological commitments Wesley wishes to defend and to scrutinize the philosophical assumptions he makes to support them.

A Limited Regard for Locke

Wesley is often noted for his abridgements of various works, which he made available to the common people. The Jackson Edition of Wesley's *Works* lists one hundred eighteen of these projects, including authors such as Thomas à Kempis, William Law, and Jonathan Edwards.² Moreover, Wesley also provided commentary on various writings which he considered to be useful reading. Among those which I find most intriguing is his "Remarks upon Mr. Locke's 'Essay on Human Understanding.'"³

Apparently, this was not Wesley's first acquaintance with Locke. He made this particular commentary in the spring of 1781, thirteen years after he had noted the inclusion of Locke's *Essay* in the curriculum at the Kingswood School.⁴ It does not seem likely that Wesley would approve the use of instructional material with which he was unfamiliar. Considering the fact that the *Essay* was officially condemned at Oxford, Wesley's loyalties could have hindered him from examining it; yet Wesley does not seem to have feared investigating controversial works on occasion.

I surmise that Wesley already had a general familiarity with Locke's *Essay*, but he decided to engage with it more deeply at this point in time. Perhaps the appearance of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* three years earlier prompted this investigation. After all, Locke's work had been taken in several directions. Berkeley took the route of idealism, Reid helped establish "common sense" realism, and Hume opted for epistemic skepticism. Kant built upon Hume, but he tried to protect morality and certain aspects of cognition from Hume's skepticism. In doing so, he distanced himself from the brand of realism which Wesley wished to uphold.

Three years after this commentary, Wesley recommended the *Essay* as foundational reading. In an undated letter, Wesley made a similar suggestion to another person.⁵ The interesting question is why Wesley chose merely to comment on the work, rather than to abridge it. Perhaps the massive length of the work would not allow such an abridgment to be made within his time constraints. Albeit, Wesley did not consider Locke to be everyday reading, for he admits that the *Essay* may not be understood by the average person, affirming his commitment to provide reading material for the learned as well as the unlearned.⁶

In general, his assessment of Locke was favorable. He likens the difference between Locke and Montesquieu to that between an adult and a child, placing Locke on the same par with Pascal and Malebranche, both of whom he respected on the whole.⁷ Wesley claims to approve of the *Essay* with a few reservations. He affirms the work's popularity as well-deserved, then he commends Locke for his display of "a deep fear of God, and reverence for his word." He qualifies this through the observation, "And though there are some mistakes, yet these are abundantly compensated by many curious and useful reflections."⁸ Wesley acknowledges Locke's attempt to provide a balanced account of reason, the type of project he ultimately wishes to embrace.⁹ In the end, he concludes,

From a careful consideration of this whole work, I conclude that, together with several mistakes, (but none of them of any great importance,) it contains many excellent truths, proposed in a clear and strong manner, by a great master both of reasoning and language. It might, therefore, be of admirable use to young students, if read with a judicious Tutor, who could confirm and enlarge upon what is right, and guard them against what is wrong in it. They might then make their full use of all the just remarks made by this excellent writer, and yet without that immoderate attachment to him which is so common among his readers.¹⁰

Wesley remains in basic agreement with Locke throughout the first two parts of the *Essay*, since they focus more on epistemology, especially the process of cognition. His major objections to the work lie in parts III and IV, where Locke begins his discussion of nominalism. His praise for Locke remains somewhat confined to Locke's role as a "master of reasoning."

It is my opinion that Wesley did not see the benefit in abridging Locke, but felt it sufficient to point out what differences he had with him. This is also validated by the fact that Wesley's few remarks in this short treatise are mostly critical, whereas his remarks about Locke elsewhere have the semblance of professional courtesies. If my theory is true, then the critical remarks contained in these few pages provide some significant insights into Wesley's thought, most particularly his epistemology.

Lockean Empiricism

Frederick Dreyer asserts, "In explaining how the mind acquired the knowledge it possessed, Wesley's agreement with Locke was complete."¹¹ This seems to be a rather common assumption, but it is one I wish to challenge, for Wesley reveals an alliance with Locke that is limited.

Initially, Locke and Wesley are on the same page in regard to their epistemic systems. Locke begins with his notion of *tabula rasa*, denying the existence of innate ideas.¹² Wesley agrees with this premise and credits Locke for proving the point beyond all noteworthy objection.¹³ In denying the existence of innate ideas, he claims that the role of the senses becomes more crucial to a proper understanding of the world, i.e. "true judgments" must be founded upon "clear apprehensions" which, in turn, are formed from

sensory data.¹⁴ Once again, Wesley praises Locke for validating this construal, but the agreement will be short-lived, for we have already reached the point where Wesley and Locke begin to part company.¹⁵

Wesley understands cognition to be impossible without the existence of ideas, yet he does not conform to some of the more conventional theories of ideas which portray them as mental images. Rather, Wesley seems to favor a conception of ideas that is more propositional in content.¹⁶ It becomes apparent that Wesley needs to define ideas in these terms to allow them to coincide with his conception of the “operations of the mind.” In this regard, he begins to diverge from Locke, claiming that Locke errs in complicating the Aristotelian cognitive schema, which assigns three basic functions to mind: 1) simple apprehension, 2) judgment, and 3) discourse.¹⁷

Richard E. Brantley seems to ignore Wesley’s objections on this point. Instead, he insists that Wesley and Locke hold equivalent, if not identical, conceptions of human cognitive processes.¹⁸ The comments made by Wesley unequivocally indicate that he perceived his own approach, which was essentially that of Aristotle, to be markedly different from Locke’s explanation.

Wesley adheres to Aristotle’s categories, defining them elsewhere in his writings. In simple apprehension, ideas are formed from sensations, whereupon judgment takes the ideas and compares them to determine their agreement or disagreement with one another. Finally, the mind “reasons” the judgments, inferring one from another, i.e. connecting them syllogistically. This is the process of discourse.¹⁹

Wesley’s understanding of ideas parallels that of Reid to an extent. For one thing, Wesley and Reid both reject a pictorial model of ideas. They believe ideas to be

propositional, carrying truth claims about realities which are empirically perceived.

Wesley also contends that we see “self-evident axioms” with “certainty and clearness,” a prominent theme in Reid’s epistemology.²⁰ Moreover, he defines an evident proposition according to Reid’s conception, suggesting that it “extorts the assent as soon as it is understood.” As if this were not enough, Wesley continues by placing all propositions in one of two categories: self-evident axioms and propositions which are deduced from them. Once again, this is precisely Reid’s account.²¹

On the whole, Wesley expressed mixed emotions regarding Reid. He was “greatly delighted” by the first part of Reid’s *Essay on the Intellectual Powers of Man*. He claimed that the latter part was too obscure and disappointing, though he admitted that his negative sentiments were probably tainted by his detestation of Reid’s admiration for Rousseau, whom he considered to be exceeded in arrogance only by Voltaire.²²

I would propose that Wesley’s epistemology serves as a model for his understanding of spiritual apprehension. His rejection of innate ideas parallels his contention that the natural self has no perception of God. It is only through prevenient grace that God can be perceived before conversion; however, this perception is partial and unclear at best. Those who would deny God’s existence cannot perceive him, similar to the way that cognition cannot function without the data supplied to it by the senses.²³ Thus, the “spiritual sense” must also have “clear apprehensions” before “true judgments” can be formed regarding spiritual matters.

Locke likewise describes judgment as the mind’s ability to compare ideas in regard to their degree of conformity, but he asserts that this function occurs in the absence of “clear and certain knowledge,” proposing that judgment compensates for the

lack of “demonstrative evidence,”²⁴ Wesley cannot accept this definition, for it limits the function of judgment to matters that are only probable and not certain.²⁵ Wesley needs an epistemology that allows a high degree of certainty.

First, his hermeneutic is weak without the certainty of reason, especially since he is willing to factor in the subjective element of experience. Wesley repeatedly asserts the “Law and the Testimony” as the only “certain test” of subjective experience.²⁶ The reference to scripture is obvious, coinciding with his assertion that spiritual matters are “conjectural” and “uncertain” without special revelation.²⁷ Nevertheless, since he does not refer to scripture directly, I surmise that he indicates “testimony” in a broader sense, incorporating traditional Christian orthodoxy.

Wesley’s trust in scripture and church tradition is rooted in his belief in the integrity of language, as discussed below in the section on nominalism. He feels that certainty can be based on testimony, as it is in history.²⁸ Scripture itself is testimony, so it can be trusted. However, the interpretation of scripture must also be accurate. One cannot substitute “precarious inward motion, in the place of the written word.”²⁹

Once again, testimony is the guide, since Wesley considers the ancient church fathers to be superior to the “modern Mystics” in scriptural interpretation.³⁰ He seeks the most objective account of scripture possible. Donald Thorsen points out that although historical-critical issues regarding scripture were not as prevalent in Wesley’s day, it appears that he would not have objected to the project.³¹ In fact, he insisted that any serious study of the scriptures requires them to be read critically in their original languages.³² Wesley was well acquainted with textual criticism; he even complains of

various “emendations” contained in the King James version.³³ There is no reason to believe that he would not have engaged in source criticism as well.

Also, Wesley requires a reliable epistemology that can buttress his doctrine of the witness of the Holy Spirit. In a letter to his mother, he expressed his sentiment that if people cannot be certain of their salvation, they will be most fearful and miserable.³⁴ There must be some type of assurance available to believers. He believes that uncertainties are dispelled by the knowledge of God, especially that which is apprehended directly.³⁵

Here, epistemic certainty again must overcome subjectivity. Wesley believes that reason and life experiences help to counterbalance intuition, but this is not enough.³⁶ Rather, he turns to scripture to provide objective traits which characterize the believer. Individuals must be scrutinized by some external source to avoid self-presumption about their spiritual state.³⁷ More specifically, the fruit of the Spirit must be produced in the life that claims to be Christian. The outward results of these virtues can be judged by others, but the inward motives must be judged by personal conscience.³⁸ This is about all that can be reasonably expected.

“Q. What is reasonable proof? How may we certainly know one that is saved from all sin?

“A. We cannot infallibly know one that is thus saved, (no, nor even one that is justified,) unless it should please God to endow us with the miraculous discernment of spirits. But we apprehend those would be sufficient proofs to any reasonable man, and such as would leave little room to doubt either the truth or depth of the work:

(1.) If we had clear evidence of his exemplary behavior for some time before this supposed change. This would give us reason to believe, he would not ‘lie for God,’ but speak neither more nor less than he felt;

(2.) If he gave a distinct account of the time and manner wherein the change was wrought with sound speech which could not be reproved; and,

(3.) If it appeared that all his subsequent words and actions were holy and unblamable.

“The short of the matter is this:

(1.) I have abundant reason to believe, this person will not lie;

(2.) He testifies before God, ‘I feel no sin, but all love; I pray, rejoice, and give thanks without ceasing; and I have as clear an inward witness, that I am fully renewed, as that I am justified.’ Now, if I have nothing to oppose to this plain testimony, I ought in reason to believe it.³⁹

In summary, Wesley wishes to allow a subjective experience of assurance, but the door is left open for many illegitimate claims, even on his own terms. The best that can be done is to judge the lifestyle and the character of the person making the claim. Inconsistencies here invalidate the profession of assurance. The claim itself must be accepted on the testimony of the subject, judged by the person’s apparent truthfulness. The bottom line is that the experience can only be judged externally. It is invulnerable to internal scrutiny.

It appears that there is no way to prevent illegitimate professions. On one occasion, Wesley notes that after he left a revival, “enthusiasm” set in. People were imagining false revelations from God and the like. Should this type of abuse be prevented altogether? Wesley says not, for he concludes that Satan always “sows tares among the wheat.” Trying to eliminate the false experiences would result in the elimination of the valid ones as well.⁴⁰ Therefore, the unfortunate result must be tolerated.

Next, Wesley bases spiritual epistemic certainty on an analogy between the natural senses and the “spiritual senses.” He feels that the natural senses must be trusted for the material world to be intelligible.⁴¹ In the same way, the spiritual senses (e.g. faith) give certainty to spiritual matters.⁴² After all, Wesley contends that a person must receive

new senses, ideas, passions, and tempers in order to be a Christian.⁴³ This is how God is perceived.

In general, Wesley asserts that certainty cannot be based on hearsay or “subtle and uncertain reasonings” but on empirical observation.⁴⁴ More specifically, a “certain” proposition is one against which “nothing of weight” occurs. Certainty can occur in degrees, depending upon the amount of opposition that can be mounted against the proposition.⁴⁵ Wesley assesses the spectrum of certainty as follows:

If, therefore, we were to make a sort of scale of assent, it might consist of the following steps: —

1. Human faith, an assent to a doubtful proposition:
2. Opinion, to a probable:
3. What we may term sentiment, an assent to a certain proposition:
4. Science, to a certain and evident conclusion:
5. Intelligence, to a self-evident axiom:
6. Divine faith, to a Divine revelation.⁴⁶

Many would not disagree with this scale, that is, until the final point. Wesley wishes divine revelation to be the most certain, since it is immediately perceived. However, this scale which Wesley supplies does not adequately clarify his multi-tiered understanding of faith. First, he distinguishes mere *assent* to theological truths. This type of faith is not saving faith, for even the demons possess this type of belief, yet they remain reprobate. Faith must therefore surpass assent and become *trust*. Essentially, those who would be saved must trust that their sins are forgiven, and this type of trust will produce “a loving heart” that is able to “obey [God’s] commandments.”⁴⁷ Thus, saving faith is “a divine conviction of God, and the things of God, as, even in its infant state, enables every one that possesses it to ‘fear God and work righteousness.’”⁴⁸

Wesley refers to saving faith as the faith of a “servant,” in which the believer is enabled to perceive evidence of the “invisible world.” Hence, the believer is able to understand beyond what the senses can dictate.⁴⁹ However, the servant must now become a child through adoption. Once this level of faith is attained, the believer no longer trusts that her sins are forgiven, but she is assured that they are.⁵⁰ This is what Wesley otherwise refers to as the “witness of the Spirit.” *Assurance* is granted as “the love of God [is] shed abroad in the heart.”⁵¹ How is it that the love of God is experienced in such a way? The servants of God “receive the faith of the children of God, by his revealing his only begotten Son in their hearts.”⁵² This is very similar to Edwards’ assertion that the love of God is experienced where the beauty of Christ is revealed.

I have tried to show that although he protects the individual’s right to claim such a revelation, he is ultimately unable to scrutinize it unless it results in a clear violation of scriptural principles. In fact, Wesley admits, “The manner of how the divine testimony is manifested to the heart, I do not take upon me to explain. Such knowledge is too wonderful and excellent for me; I cannot attain unto it.”⁵³ If it cannot be explained, then it is difficult to critique, to say the least.

The question is now whether the end should justify the means. In other words, should subjective experiences be discouraged altogether, even when they seemingly produce the type of faith and virtue promoted in scripture without any negative concomitants? As we have already seen, Wesley chose to err on the side of toleration, believing that it is better to have both the legitimate and the illegitimate than to have neither. For Wesley, the end does not justify the means, but it does outweigh the means. Moreover, he believes that although genuine spiritual experiences can be counterfeited,

they can only be produced through legitimate means, i.e. it is difficult to imagine how holy people could be produced by unholy means. Therefore, if the means (i.e. subjective experiences) cannot be objectively assessed, perhaps the results can. In the case of divine faith, a personal revelation of Christ produces certainty of one's spiritual state. In effect, both the end and the means are subjective. Once again, Wesley is unable to avoid the precipice.

It must be pointed out that even though divine faith occurs in levels, and even though divine faith occurs on the scale of certainty with other types of belief, Wesley is careful to preserve divine faith as a separate entity from the others. "It is where sense can be of no further use, that faith comes in to help."⁵⁴ Basically, empirical knowledge can only produce certainty about the physical world, which it ascertains. In contrast, the spiritual (i.e. invisible) world must ultimately be ascertained by a "spiritual sense," since God's presence is generally not manifested in the physical realm. As a result, the "natural" self cannot perceive God, yet this changes as faith unfolds. "How different is the case, how vast the pre-eminence, of them that 'walk by faith!' God, having 'opened the eyes of their understanding,' pours divine light into their soul; whereby they are enabled to 'see Him that is invisible,' to see God and the things of God."⁵⁵

My problem with the inclusion of divine faith in Wesley's scale of assent is not the assertion that such faith carries the highest degree of certainty. Rather, I contend that divine faith should be considered a separate case, since it is not perceived empirically and cannot be objectively scrutinized. St. Thomas Aquinas separated the theological virtues from the others in part for such reasons.

It is also interesting to note that Wesley shares Locke's belief in the association of ideas. Locke suggests that ideas often become inseparably connected. Two ideas that are connected in this way will occur together. The occurrence of one will generate the occurrence of the other. This connection can take place in one of two basic ways. First, ideas can be associated through habit, whether or not the habit is willful or involuntary. For example, if I get in the habit of drinking a cup of coffee every morning, then I will begin to think of coffee automatically when I awaken, even when I am away from home and do not have access to coffee. The second way that ideas become connected is through some physiological change or condition. Perhaps I eat so much Easter candy that I get nauseous. If the impression is strong enough, any future thoughts of chocolate may also make me nauseous.⁵⁶

Wesley sees the validity in both types of connection. He acknowledges that ideas can become associated through mental and physical habits.⁵⁷ Moreover, he devotes a significant portion of the sermon "Wandering Thoughts" to the notion that physical ailments and conditions can wreak havoc on the mind, introducing thoughts over which the subject has no control. He does not believe that such thoughts are blameworthy, because they are not voluntary.⁵⁸

Therefore, Wesley's approach to salvation is holistic, addressing the person in both body and spirit. Both aspects of our humanity affect one another. The association of ideas also indicates that religious experience cannot be compartmentalized; it affects every aspect of life. Conversely, the Christian must live a disciplined lifestyle in every part of life, because what we do in one area of our lives affects the other areas, most particularly in regard to our dispositions and habits.

The Centrality of Logic

The criticisms that Wesley levels against Locke regarding his perceived lack of logic are rather harsh.

In reading over the second volume of Mr. Locke's Essay, I was much disappointed: It is by no means equal to the first. The more I considered it, the more convinced I was that his grand design (vain design!) was to drive Aristotle's Logic out of the world, which he hated cordially, but never understood: I suppose, because he had an unskillful master, and read bad books upon the subject.⁵⁹

It must be remembered that Wesley was a teaching fellow in logic at Lincoln College, Oxford, so it is only natural that his sensitivities concerning logic would be rather pronounced. However, Wesley's criticisms of Locke's use of logic are not fully explained by this fact, for his other comments regarding the importance of logic bear upon the epistemology outlined above. His high regard of logic extends beyond his response to Locke, for it is reflected in his other writings as well.

Wesley refers to logic as "the art of reasoning," for he believes that it assists all three operations of the mind: apprehension, judgment, and discourse.⁶⁰ Logic is fundamental to knowledge and to our claims on it. It should thus be regarded as an essential part of one's education. Wesley specifically asserts logic's role as the "gate of the sciences."⁶¹ Those who would not be charlatans must have a firm grasp of it.

And with regard to the arts and sciences; how few understand so much as the general principles of logic! Can one in ten of the Clergy, (O grief of heart!) or of the Masters of Arts in either University, when an argument is brought, tell you even the mood and figure wherein it is proposed; or complete an enthymeme? . . . Can one in ten of them demonstrate a Problem or theorem in Euclid's Elements, or define the common terms used in Metaphysics, or intelligibly explain the first principles of it? Why

then will they pretend to that learning which they are conscious to themselves they have not? Where are sincerity and candor fled?⁶²

Locke disdains the use of logic in discourse, because he believes that the art of rhetorical debate has led to the obscuring of language. Words are twisted and nuanced in such a way as to render their meanings unintelligible.⁶³ In addition, his nominalism will not allow for conventional uses of logic. Since knowledge progresses from the particular to the general, very little can be asserted in relating the general categories to one another.⁶⁴ Wesley finds these conclusions unsettling. He admits that many abuses of logic have brought about confusion. However, he contends that the antidote lies in clarifying the misconceptions through pure logic, not in discarding logic altogether. Wesley contends that Locke himself has confused his audience due to his neglect of logic.⁶⁵ Logic has a way of bringing discourse to the point, eliminating not only much confusion, but a significant amount of verbiage as well.⁶⁶

The use of logic in language is paramount to Wesley's scriptural hermeneutic, for Wesley believes that reason is a necessary tool in the proper interpretation of scripture. In fact, on a scale of importance, he ranks the knowledge of logic just below the knowledge of scripture.⁶⁷ The whole notion that logic is key to understanding scripture not only says something about the subject, it also says something about the object. In other words, before logic can be effective in interpreting scripture, the scriptures themselves must be logical and coherent. The possibility of forming logical constructions out of illogical elements is untenable.

If the analogy of the mind's operations is applied here, it can be inferred that logic assists in: 1) gaining clear perceptions or apprehensions of scriptural truths, 2) determining the agreement between various scriptural tenets, and 3) inferring some

scriptural teachings from others. Consequently, doctrine, Biblical theology, and systematic theology are all dependent upon logic, because they require these three functions in varying degrees. Furthermore, several other implications arise from these premises. First, it must be believed that the Holy Spirit's supernatural assistance in understanding scripture either bypasses reason, giving a logical understanding through mystical means, or it heightens one's powers of reason so that the mind might think more logically. The first option seems unlikely, since the Bible has been interpreted in so many ways. If the Holy Spirit did present logical interpretations in a mystical way, the prospect of widespread uniformity in understanding scripture would seem more probable. Therefore, the role of the Spirit in scriptural interpretation is to heighten the mind's ability without surpassing it.⁶⁸ Wesley asserts:

Is it not reason (assisted by the Holy Ghost) which enables us to understand what the Holy Scriptures declare concerning the being and attributes of God? – concerning his eternity and immensity; his power, wisdom, and holiness? It is by reason that God enables us in some measure to comprehend his method of dealing with the children of men . . . It is by this that we understand (his Spirit opening and enlightening the eyes of our understanding) what repentance is, [what is] not to be repented of; what is that faith whereby we are saved . . . By the due use of reason we come to know what are the tempers implied in inward holiness; and what it is to be outwardly holy . . . In other words, what is the mind that was in Christ; and what it is to walk as Christ walked.⁶⁹

Second, viewing the hermeneutical process in this way assumes the coherence of scripture. There could otherwise be no agreement between its various teachings. The notion of coherence, in turn, implies a certain teleology in scripture. The various teachings of scripture are coherent because they have an overarching purpose: the redemption of the human race. To the readers of scripture, Wesley recommends, "Have a

constant eye to the analogy of faith, the connection and harmony there is between those grand, fundamental doctrines.”⁷⁰

Third, if scriptural principles can be inferred from one another, then each part of scripture is best understood as a particular part of the whole. Not only is the immediate context important to interpreting scripture, the broader context is as well. Else, many inferences may be missed without a thorough knowledge of scripture. Fourth, the inferential nature of scripture also implies the existence of predicates from which can be made new inferences. Consider the following:

A: “In due time Christ died for the ungodly.”
B: “All have sinned and come short of the glory of God.”
C: Therefore, Christ died for all.
Since what is universally true may be particularized,
B’: I have sinned and come short of the glory of God.
C’: Therefore, Christ died for me.

These last two points are summarized in this exhortation that Wesley makes to the clergy:

In order to understand scripture, we must possess “a knowledge of all the Scriptures; seeing scripture interprets scripture; one part fixing the sense of another . . . In order to do this accurately, ought he not to know the literal meaning of every word, verse, and chapter; without which there can be no firm foundation on which the spiritual meaning can be built? Should he not likewise be able to deduce the proper corollaries, speculative and practical, from each text . . . and to make a suitable application of all to the consciences of his hearers?”⁷¹

Wesley reacted strongly against Locke’s disdain of logic. The anti-intellectual, illogical attitude that has permeated so much of Christianity today would be equally egregious to him.

Nominalism

Locke maintains that we only perceive particulars, not universals. It would be accurate to name every particular that we encounter, but such is an impossibility and is impractical.⁷² With the exception of proper names, which we assign to particulars, we give general names to things. However, for Locke these general names are nothing more than abstract ideas.⁷³ They denote similarities that we observe in the objects, yet we cannot speak of the objects themselves, only our ideas of them. Hence, the general names that we assign to things say nothing essential about them, they only describe our ideas of them.⁷⁴

Wesley finds this portrayal to be appalling. He distinguishes the nominal from the real, referring to the “nominal definition” as the “derivation of the word” and to the “real definition” as the “nature of the thing.”⁷⁵ He assumes that objects have a real essence which determines their properties.⁷⁶ In contrast, Locke denies the validity of classifying objects by genus and species, attacking the medieval scholastics for their propagation of the method.⁷⁷ Wesley comes to their defense, declaiming Locke’s understanding of them. Thereupon, he defends the use of genus and species, citing the Biblical doctrine of creation.⁷⁸

Wesley continues to fill out this account, asserting that God established “boundaries” between the various species. Each species has been given a distinct essence, although some of them may share properties in common. Nevertheless, both the essence and its accompanying properties are real, regardless of whether or not we perceive them. Wesley rhetorically asks, “Does my idea of them make a horse, a cow, and a dog, three distinct species? Would not these species be equally distinct, if I had no

idea of them at all?” Then he adds the belief that the species are also distinguished by generation (e.g. dogs generate dogs, horses generate horses, etc.)⁷⁹ He concludes his argument with a jab at Locke, “Whatever Mr. Locke says against the terms ‘essence’ or ‘species,’ he can find no better words. But I impute this to his violent spleen against logic, which he never rightly understood.”⁸⁰

It is apparent that Wesley is trying to uphold some version of natural law. He wants to assert a certain order, balance, and harmony in nature. In fact, it could almost be assumed that his account of natural law is teleological to the extent that God purposely gave each species a certain essence with distinct characteristics. This has implications for Wesley’s doctrine of sin, for it seems that such an account of natural law would lead to the conclusion that certain actions are natural and others are unnatural. To this extent, acting intentionally against nature is sinful in that it goes against the will of God, imprinted upon the world at creation.

In like manner, when God, in his appointed time, had created a new order of intelligent beings, when he had raised man from the dust of the earth, breathed into him the breath of life, and caused him to become a living soul, endued with power to choose good and evil; he gave to this free, intelligent creature, the same law as to his first-born children [i.e. angels]; not written, indeed upon tables of stone, or any corruptible substance, but engraved on his heart by the finger of God; written in the inmost spirit both of men and of angels; to the intent it might never be far off, never hard to be understood, but always at hand, and always shining with clear light, even as the sun in the midst of heaven.⁸¹

For Wesley, sin has unfortunately corrupted nature, both in the spiritual and in the material realms. However, Wesley would still assert an understanding of morality that would tend to promote the natural order as God intended it to be. It would tend toward the common good.

It should be pointed out that Wesley's difficulties with Locke's nominalism also stem from his concern for epistemic certainty. Locke wishes to argue for the co-existence of simple ideas in substances, which renders them only partially intelligible. In other words, we only have fragmentary knowledge of objects. Once complex ideas are formed about a particular object, the variations from person to person in these ideas will be so great as to render terminology useless.⁸²

Wesley contends that ideas exist only in the mind. Partial knowledge of an object is not an inherent flaw in the cognitive process. It is usually attributed to the lack of a clear apprehension. Wesley is not so skeptical concerning complex ideas, for they are commonly used without any difficulty. His confidence in everyday language is strong enough to boast, "Yes, we know what [words] stand for perfectly well; and no sophister can persuade us to the contrary."⁸³

In the introduction to *A Survey of the Wisdom of God in the Creation: Or, A Compendium of Natural Philosophy*, Wesley appears to contradict his otherwise realist stance.

I endeavor throughout not to account for things, but only to describe them. I undertake barely to set down what appears in nature; not the cause of those appearances. The facts lie within the reach of our senses and understanding; the causes are more remote. That things are so, we know with certainty; but why they are so, we know not. In many cases we cannot know; and the more we inquire, the more we are perplexed and entangled. God hath so done his works, that we may admire and adore; but we cannot search them out to perfection.⁸⁴

Dreyer refers to this passage in making the claim that Wesley "disclaimed all knowledge of things in their real natures." He continues, "In the visible world, the best that human reason could do was to describe and classify the information that the senses

provided. The metaphysical nature of things lay beyond the reach of human understanding.”⁸⁵

I believe that this overstates Wesley’s position. We cannot assume that because Wesley denies knowing the cause of being he also denies any knowledge of being itself. When we perceive an object, there is a vast difference between saying: 1) we can only have perceptions that are partially valid and 2) we can have valid perceptions, but only a partial knowledge of the object. The former is the more skeptical and appears to be Dreyer’s interpretation of Wesley. However, it seems that Wesley is asserting the latter. He is not disclaiming *all* knowledge of things in themselves. Rather, he is claiming that such knowledge, while perfectly valid, is limited both in scope and in extent.

Wesley basically alleges that we can never learn all there is to know about God’s creation. The details are endless. Moreover, we can only observe effects and speculate as to their causes, unless the causes themselves can also be directly observed. Moreover, all causes are essentially the effects of prior causes, and the chain can only be traced back as far as observation will allow. In this way, metaphysical arguments are the products of imagination, not reason, since they cannot be empirically observed. This argument was propounded by Hume in *A Treatise of Human Nature*. For Wesley, special revelation provides the bridge from empiricism to metaphysics. Only as God has specifically revealed His purposes through scripture can His purposes be known. Hume would not allow any such connection between metaphysics and empirical data.

Wesley’s epistemic concerns are more likely related to teleology than they are to ontology. The immediate context of Wesley’s remarks is crucial here, for Wesley is speaking of knowing things in themselves in regard to creation. In other words, the

passage to which Dreyer alludes is not purely philosophical, but is driven by theological assumptions, namely, that we can never fully understand or be overly certain about the creative purposes of God.

Wesley asserts that we can know “facts,” not “causes.” I would not be so quick as to limit “facts” to mere appearances. Most likely, Wesley would regard scientific accounts and explanations as factual, so long as they are verified through empirical observation and induction. This was the conventional method of his day. Therefore, Wesley’s understanding of facts would include both “is” and “how,” to the extent that they are observable. What he denies knowing apart from special revelation is “why.” Overall, these remarks by Wesley do identify him as an empiricist, but not to the extent that Dreyer would like to assert.

Locke’s nominalism also leads him to denigrate the role of testimony. His premise is that we can only trust our senses, not our words. For this reason, every time a personal testimony is passed to an additional party, the account becomes less credible.⁸⁶ The obvious concern here is the apostolic witness to the resurrection of Christ. Wesley supports the veracity of the scriptural account, claiming that it is as credible today as it was when it happened.⁸⁷ He makes this claim by retaining the integrity of communication, as described above. This not only adds to the feasibility of believing scripture, it also has significant implications for preaching and teaching scripture, two activities central to Wesley’s ministry.

Brantley makes a strong case to correlate Wesley’s use of analogy with that of Locke and Peter Browne.⁸⁸ However, the distinctions that I have pointed out in this section indicate that such a comparison must be qualified by Locke’s nominalism and

Wesley's realism. It is true that the use of analogy in either case allows what would otherwise be unintelligible to be expressed in accessible terms. Nevertheless, Locke's nominalism can only admit to a fragmentary possession of knowledge which is at best probable, since it is limited to particular sensations. In other words, if particular sensations are all that can be known, then knowledge cannot be certain, but can only become more probable as the sensations are repeated. Analogies derived from them will likewise result in fragmentary, probable knowledge. In contrast, Wesley's knowledge begins with empirical data but is not limited to particulars. As such, he is able to generalize through induction and achieve certainty, exceeding Locke's limit of mere probability.

It seems that the use of analogy within the bounds of realism might locate Wesley closer to Aquinas than to Locke, especially in light of the fact that Aquinas and Wesley share a penchant for Aristotle. Moreover, the simple fact that both Locke and Wesley relate the senses analogically to spiritual apprehension must not be overplayed. Such analogies were not uncommon during the eighteenth century. Shaftesbury, Hutcheson, Price, Reid, et. al. all constructed similar analogies to explain the existence of conscience, yet it would be presumptuous to call them Lockean for that reason.

Personhood

Wesley accuses Locke of equating personal identity with consciousness. Building on Descartes, Locke suggests that identity is retained through consciousness (since that is where thinking occurs) and through our memories of consciousness. Indeed, Locke claims that "Socrates asleep and Socrates awake is not the same person."⁸⁹ Wesley

retorts, “Was [there] ever a more palpable absurdity? Does knowing I exist, make me exist? No; I am before I know I am; and I am the same, before I can possibly know I am the same. Observe, ‘before’ here refers to the order of thinking, not to the order of time.”⁹⁰ He concludes that there may be “identity without consciousness.” Even though consciousness usually accompanies identity, they are not one and the same.⁹¹

Here, Wesley’s conception of the soul is at stake. He understands a “person” to be a “thinking, intelligent being.” Whether or not this being is conscious or unconscious, it remains a person because its essence is unaffected. The human soul animates the human body; therefore, each of us remains the same person throughout life, since our true identity is in the soul itself.⁹² As a matter of fact, Wesley regards the notion of a completely material, thinking being as an absurdity.⁹³

Preserving human accountability into the afterlife is a serious concern for Wesley, for it is the prospect of a final judgment that prods people to moral behavior in the present. We will each be rewarded or punished for our works on earth.⁹⁴ For this to be true, the soul must remain intact through death and into the afterlife. Furthermore, the soul must be the same even after the final resurrection, when our earthly bodies are replaced with “incorruptible” ones. Wesley nuances the terms a bit in an effort to explain the phenomenon. He distinguishes “flesh and blood” from “body,” understanding the latter to be that which attaches the soul to flesh and blood.⁹⁵

Two final notes can be made regarding other ethical implications of Wesley’s account of personhood. First, his locating the identity of the person in the soul enables him to claim personhood for those whose intellectual capabilities are either not developed or are incapacitated. This would include the fetus, the comatose, and those who

otherwise exhibit little or no brain function. Wesley anticipates such a distinction. “If, consciousness ceasing, identity ceases, a draught of Lethe would change a man into another person. Yea, or if a fever wiped out what was past out of the memory, he would not be the same person, nor consequently accountable either to God or man for anything that he, that is, another person, had done before.”⁹⁶ Obviously, he believes that accountability continues for past willful deeds, even if consciousness is lost a significant period of time prior to death.

Second, the distinction between identity and consciousness is helpful to a conception of conscience. The fact that a certain action is laudable or blamable is distinct from conscience’s perception of the fact. Rather, conscience is the awareness of this laudability or blameability. Even if the conscience is not aware of the merit or demerit of the act, the merit or demerit remains intact and is not diminished. Nevertheless, Wesley would not regard the individual to be accountable for such an act, since it was performed without the guidance of the conscience. What this distinction does for Wesley’s view of conscience is to provide a motivation for re-examining acts that might not have been scrutinized by conscience beforehand. This helps to make the conscience more sensitive and prevents the individual from choosing the path of ignorance, so as to avoid accountability. Of course, even acts performed on the path of ignorance are accountable if the path was chosen willingly.

Human Agency

Also related to ethical concerns is Wesley’s understanding of human agency. He denies Locke’s contention that the human will is moved by a feeling of “uneasiness.” He

answers, “Not always. Pleasure determines it as often as pain. But ‘desire is uneasiness.’ It is not: We desire to enjoy pleasure as much as to avoid pain. But desire differs *toto genere*, both from one and the other. Therefore, all that follows, about pain alone determining the will, is wrong from end to end.” He then points to Locke’s later affirmation of happiness as the motivator for will, as a sheer contradiction.⁹⁷

I would suggest that Wesley misunderstood Locke on this point. Locke refers to “desire” as a lack of pleasure. Thus, desire is not experiencing a pleasure, but experiencing feelings of uneasiness regarding its lack. In this way, it could be called an “absent positive good.” Similarly, Locke nuances the meaning of “pain.” Normally, it would refer to a feeling to be avoided. For Locke, this type of pain is not aversive, but anticipatory.

The apparent contradiction is resolved by indicating that Locke uses “desire” in two senses: 1) the craving for happiness and 2) the yearning for that craving to be fulfilled. First, the craving for happiness aims at happiness itself, so it is not inconsistent for Locke to assert happiness as the ultimate motivation for will. Second, the yearning for that craving to be fulfilled can be characterized by uneasiness. It is my contention that the “uneasiness” is dependent on one’s anticipation of whether or not the desired pleasure can be attained. Locke seems to assume that this uneasiness is always there, but I believe it occurs in proportion with the extent to which the craving for pleasure is thwarted or hindered. This would account for Locke’s use of the term, if in fact he intends it to denote some form of pain. It very well may be that he does not, in which case the term would most likely refer to a state of disquiet, i.e. a disruption of the psyche’s normal state of placidity.

Wesley's account of Christian perfection is not compatible with Locke's description of will. The perfected Christian is not moved by uneasiness nor by a lack of love. Instead, perfect love feeds itself, so to speak. Even those who would not accept Wesley's notion of perfect love as attainable in this life must still consider its existence in eternity. In other words, is it to be asserted that the saints forever love God from a feeling of uneasiness? This is indeed problematic.

It seems that Locke's assertion assumes that all desires can be sated and dulled. Hence, one is only moved by them whenever they are not fulfilled. The question is whether this characterization is valid for perfect love. Obviously, Wesley believes that the love we receive from God generates the desire to love God in return. Since God's love is infinite, it is always possible for us to love God even more. Indeed, God cannot be loved inordinately. There are some instances when love for God is used as an alibi for not properly loving others or oneself. Nevertheless, these cases are not valid, since true love for God results in loving others.⁹⁸

Regardless of what Locke specifically intended, it is clear what Wesley wants to defend. His understanding of human will ascribes a significant role to feelings, emotions, passions, and appetites. While he asserts that through "clear ideas" we see the divine perfections and our duty, he still believes that these ideas, coupled with reason, cannot counterbalance the passions and appetites.⁹⁹ In his sermon, "The Great Assize," Wesley gives the following account of the criteria that will be used at the final judgment:

And in that day shall be discovered every inward working of every human soul; every appetite, passion, inclination, affection, with the various combinations of them, with every temper and disposition that constitute the whole complex character of each individual. So shall it be clearly and infallibly seen, who was righteous, and who [was] unrighteous; and in

what degree every action, or person, or character was either good or evil.¹⁰⁰

It is obvious that Wesley bases moral action in the sentiments and feels that we will be judged according to them. He asserts that God “respects the goodness of the heart, rather than the clearness of the head.”¹⁰¹ However, he does not regard the sentiments as autonomous. To illustrate this, I will draw on several passages from his treatise, “Thoughts Upon Necessity.” First, Wesley frames the dilemma.

If all the passions, the tempers, the actions of men, are wholly independent on their own choice, are governed by a principle exterior to themselves, then there can be no moral good or evil; there can be neither virtue nor vice, neither good nor bad actions, neither good nor bad passions or tempers. The sun does much good; but it is no virtue; but he is not capable of moral goodness. Why is he not? For this plain reason, because he does not act from choice. The sea does much harm: It swallows up thousands of men; but it is not capable of moral badness, because it does not act by choice, but from a necessity of nature. If indeed one or the other can be said to act at all.¹⁰²

Although Wesley recognizes the force that passions, affections, and the like exert on human action, yet the action itself is nothing more than mere instinct without the existence of free choice. The problem is understanding how this self-determining ability functions. Richard B. Steele takes up this very question, expressing his surprise at Wesley’s not postulating a three-faculty model of the soul. Instead, he interprets Wesley to be adding liberty to the other faculties. “So in order to refute Edwards’s contention that the will cannot be self-determining, Wesley invents a faculty of self-determination *different* from the will.” [italics his]¹⁰³ Thereupon he considers the subsequent passage from Wesley:

God created man an intelligent being; and endued him with will as well as understanding. Indeed, it seems, without this, his understanding would have been given to no purpose. Neither would either his will or understanding have answered any valuable purpose, if liberty had not been added to them, a power distinct from both; a power of choosing for himself, a self-determining principle. It may be doubted whether God ever made an intelligent creature without all these three faculties; whether any spirit ever existed without them; yea, whether they are not implied in the very nature of a spirit. Certain it is, that no being can be accountable for its actions, which has not liberty, as well as will and understanding.¹⁰⁴

Steele then surmises Wesley's exact intentions regarding the faculty of liberty.

But why should we regard the will as free if freedom is not a quality of the will but a faculty separate from it? He does not say. And where do we locate the affections in this strange triad? Surely not with the will, since he tells us explicitly that it is "inaccurate" to do so. How much the less with the understanding or this new faculty of "liberty." Are we to assume some fourth faculty? Again, he does not say.¹⁰⁵

On the contrary! Wesley retains a three-faculty model, redefining the terms.

It seems, they who divide the faculties of the human soul into the understanding, will, and affections, unless they make the will and affections the same thing; (and then how inaccurate is the division!) must mean by affections, the will, properly speaking, and by the term *will*, neither more nor less than *liberty*; the power of choosing either to do or not to do, (commonly called liberty of contradiction,) or to do this or the contrary, good or evil (commonly called liberty of contrariety). Without the former at least, there can be nothing good or evil, rewardable or punishable. [*italics his*]¹⁰⁶

In other words, Wesley takes the standard three-faculty model (i.e. understanding, will, and affections), and he re-labels the terms. He retains the term "understanding," replaces the term "will" with "liberty," and changes "affections" to "will." Steele was reluctant to acknowledge the last change, since Wesley supposedly deems the combination of affections and will as "inaccurate."¹⁰⁷

The apparent ambiguity can be clarified by two facts. First, Wesley only disapproved combining will and affections in the standard three-faculty model, since will in this model is the vehicle of freedom. In his proposed schema, liberty becomes the vehicle of freedom, so “will” evidently means something else than it does in the traditional model. Second, Wesley’s use of will in other places is better expressed as the intention to act, rather than the freedom to act or not act, or the freedom to act in one way over another. Hence, Wesley seems to favor will as sheer choice, not as free choice.

It could be that Wesley wishes to make finer distinctions in choice so as to distinguish his views on “free will” from those of the predestinationists, or as Wesley would refer to them, the “antinomians.” Obviously, a full account of Wesley’s views on human agency cannot be given here and may not even be possible. Nevertheless, I do believe that a logical, coherent system can be derived which will remain faithful to Wesley’s commitments, at least those which he defines. That project will have to wait for another day.

Conclusion

At first glance, the few pages that contain Wesley’s response to Locke’s *Essay* seem to be rather insignificant, especially since the comments are often so sketchy. Hopefully, I have demonstrated the depth of the issues that are involved in this piece. We are often inclined to rank importance by size, yet when it comes to a writer as busy as Wesley, it is not likely that he would take the time to read such a large work and only jot down a few comments, unless those comments focused on key issues. All in all, the relationship between Wesley and Locke should definitely be re-examined, and more

attention should be given to some of Wesley's other obscure pieces which might otherwise betray their true significance.

NOTES

¹ This paper was delivered on September 30, 2000, at a seminar held jointly by the Free Methodist and Wesleyan Churches. The prepared response by Carlton Fisher prodded me to refine the text in several places. Also, I would like to thank Jennifer Herdt, Jean Porter, and Laurence Wood for their helpful comments on this project.

A High Regard for Locke

² Wesley, *The Works of John Wesley*, 3rd ed., ed. Thomas Jackson (London: Wesleyan Methodist Book Room, 1872; reprint, Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1978), XIV: 199-318. All references to Wesley will be from this edition of his works, unless specified otherwise.

³ Ibid., XIII: 455-64.

⁴ Ibid., "A Short Account of the Kingswood School, in Bristol," XIII: 288

⁵ Wesley to Miss L-----, § 14, XII: 262; also Wesley to Miss Bishop, 18 August 1784, XIII: 39.

⁶ Wesley, "Preface to Vol. VII of *The Arminian Magazine: Consisting of Extracts and Original Treatises on Universal Redemption*," § 8, XIV: 293.

⁷ Ibid., "Thoughts upon Baron Montesquieu's 'Spirit of Laws,'" § 10, XIII: 416.

⁸ Ibid., "Essay," XIII: 455.

⁹ Ibid., "Sermon LXX. The Case of Reason Impartially Considered," § 5, VI: 352.

¹⁰ Ibid., "Essay," XIII: 464.

Lockean Empiricism

¹¹ Dreyer, "Edmund Burke and John Wesley: the Legacy of Locke," in *Religion, Secularization, and Political Thought: Thomas Hobbes to J. S. Mill*, edited by James E. Crimmins (London: Routledge, 1989), 114.

¹² Locke, "Essay of Human Understanding," *The Works of Locke* (London: C. Baldwin, 1824), I.ii, vol. 1: 13-32.

¹³ Wesley, "Essay," XIII: 455.

¹⁴ Ibid., "An Earnest Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion," §§ 32-4, VIII: 13-4. Wesley indeed seems to use Lockean empiricism as a starting point for his epistemology, but he goes on to assert a type of "spiritual empiricism," in which "spiritual senses" gather data regarding spiritual realities. In that regard, see "Sermon CX. On the Discoveries of Faith," VII: 231-8.

¹⁵ Ibid., "Essay," XIII: 456.

¹⁶ Wesley to Miss Ritchie, 12 August 1776, XIII: 57.

¹⁷ Wesley, "Essay," XIII: 456.

¹⁸ Brantley, *Locke, Wesley, and the Method of English Romanticism* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1984), 67.

¹⁹ Wesley, "Sermon CIX. What Is Man?" § 5, VII: 226.

²⁰ Ibid., "Sermon LXXI. Of Good Angels," § I.2, VI: 363.

²¹ Ibid., "Compendium of Logic, Book II," Chapter I, § II, XIV: 177-8.

²² Wesley journal, 30 June 1774, IV: 16.

²³ Wesley, "Sermon CXXV. On Living Without God," §§ 3-11, VII: 349-52.

²⁴ Locke, IV.xiv.3, vol. 2: 224.

²⁵ Wesley, "Essay," XIII: 463.

²⁶ Wesley journal, 22 June 1739, I: 206; cf. Wesley to Bishop Lavington, 1 February 1750, IX: 12; Wesley to Bishop Lavington, 8 May 1752, IX: 33; Wesley to the Bishop of Gloucester, 26 November 1762, IX: 143.

- ²⁷ Wesley, “Sermon CXXII. On Faith,” §§ 15-7, VII: 334-5; cf. “Sermon CXXIII. On the Deceitfulness of the Human Heart,” § II.8, VII: 342; “An Earnest Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion,” § 65, VIII: 27; Wesley to the Rev. Mr. Law, 6 January 1756, IX: 491.
- ²⁸ Wesley to the Rev. Dr. Conyers Middleton, 24 January 1749, X: 65.
- ²⁹ Wesley to Count Zinzendorf, 8 August 1741, I: 330-1.
- ³⁰ Ibid.
- ³¹ Donald A. D. Thorsen, *The Wesleyan Quadrilateral: Scripture, Tradition, Reason, & Experience as a Model of Evangelical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990), 139-40.
- ³² Wesley, “Address to the Clergy,” § II.1.(2), X: 491.
- ³³ Wesley journal, 13 September 1785, IV: 320-1.
- ³⁴ Wesley to Susannah Wesley, 18 June 1725, XII: 9.
- ³⁵ Wesley, “A Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion, Part II,” § III.19, VIII: 196.
- ³⁶ Ibid., “Sermon XXXVII. The Nature of Enthusiasm,” §§ 24-6, V: 474-5.
- ³⁷ Ibid., “Sermon X. The Witness of the Spirit, Discourse I,” §§ II.1-10, V: 117-21.
- ³⁸ Ibid., §§ II.11-14, 121-3.
- ³⁹ Ibid., “A Plain Account of Christian Perfection,” § 19, XI: 398-9.
- ⁴⁰ Ibid., § 20, 406-7.
- ⁴¹ Ibid., “Thoughts Upon Necessity,” § IV.3, X: 470-2.
- ⁴² Wesley to Middleton, X: 74.
- ⁴³ Wesley, “On Living Without God,” § 14, VII: 353.
- ⁴⁴ Ibid., “The Doctrine of Original Sin, Part I,” § II.11, IX: 224.
- ⁴⁵ Ibid., “Compendium of Logic, Book II,” Chapter I, § II, XIV: 177.
- ⁴⁶ Ibid., § III, 178.
- ⁴⁷ Ibid., “Sermon II. The Almost Christian,” § II.(III).5, V: 23.
- ⁴⁸ Ibid., “Sermon CVI. On Faith,” § I.11, VII: 199.
- ⁴⁹ Ibid., “Sermon CX. On the Discoveries of Faith,” §§ 13-4, VII: 235-6.
- ⁵⁰ Ibid., “Sermon CVI. On Faith,” § I.12, VII: 199.
- ⁵¹ Ibid., “Discoveries of Faith,” § 14, VII: 236; also “Sermon CVI. On Faith,” § I.12, VII: 199-200.
- ⁵² Ibid., “Sermon CVI. On Faith,” § I.12, VII: 199.
- ⁵³ Ibid., “Sermon X. The Witness of the Spirit. Discourse I,” § I.12, V: 117.
- ⁵⁴ Ibid., “Sermon CXIII. The Difference Between Walking by Sight, and Walking by Faith,” § 12, VII: 259.
- ⁵⁵ Ibid., § 13, VII: 260.
- ⁵⁶ Locke, II.xxxiii, vol. 1: 419-427.
- ⁵⁷ Wesley journal, 29 May 1745, I: 496.
- ⁵⁸ Wesley, “Sermon XLI. Wandering Thoughts,” VI: 23-32.

The Centrality of Logic

- ⁵⁹ Ibid., “Essay,” XIII: 460.
- ⁶⁰ Ibid., “A Compendium of Logic, Book I” § I, XIV: 161.
- ⁶¹ Ibid., “Address to the Clergy,” § II.1.(5), X: 491.
- ⁶² Ibid., “A Father Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion, Part III,” § III.8, VIII: 219.
- ⁶³ Locke, III.x.6-7, vol. 2: 25-6.
- ⁶⁴ Ibid., IV.vii.11, vol. 2: 277-85.
- ⁶⁵ Wesley, “Essay,” XIII: 462.
- ⁶⁶ Ibid., “Address to the Clergy,” § II.1.(5), X: 492.
- ⁶⁷ Ibid., § I.2, X: 483.
- ⁶⁸ I believe this conclusion to be consistent with those of Thorsen. Although the topic is treated more comprehensively throughout the book, the particular point I make is addressed most specifically on pp. 146-7.
- ⁶⁹ Wesley, “The Case of Reason Impartially Considered,” § I.6, VI: 354-5.

⁷⁰ Ibid., “Preface to *Explanatory Notes upon the Old Testament*,” § 18, XIV:253.

⁷¹ Ibid., “An Address to the Clergy,” § I.2, X: 482-3.

Nominalism

⁷² Locke, III.iii.2-4, vol. 1:435-6.

⁷³ Ibid., III.iii.5-9, vol. 1:436-9.

⁷⁴ Ibid., III.iii.13-17, vol. 1:447-52.

⁷⁵ Wesley, “A Compendium of Logic, Book I,” Chapter I, § VII, XIV: 164.

⁷⁶ Wesley, “Essay,” XIII: 462.

⁷⁷ Locke, III.iii.15-17, vol. 1: 449-51.

⁷⁸ Wesley, “Essay,” XIII: 461.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 462.

⁸¹ Ibid., “Sermon XXXIV. The Original, Nature, Property, and Use of the Law,” § I.3, V: 436.

⁸² Locke, III.ix.12-4, vol. 2: 13-5.

⁸³ Wesley, “Essay,” XIII: 462.

⁸⁴ Wesley, “Preface to *A Survey in the Wisdom of God in Creation*,” § 5, XIV: 301.

⁸⁵ Dreyer, “Faith and Experience in the Thought of John Wesley,” *The American Historical Review*, 88 (February 1983), 24.

⁸⁶ Locke, IV.xvi.10, vol. 2: 235-6.

⁸⁷ Wesley, “Essay,” XIII: 463.

⁸⁸ Brantley, 32 ff, 62ff.

Personhood

⁸⁹ Locke, II.i.11, vol. 1: 82.

⁹⁰ Wesley, “Essay,” XIII: 458.

⁹¹ Ibid., 459.

⁹² Ibid., 460.

⁹³ Ibid., 462. (Wouldn’t it be interesting to see Wesley’s reaction to artificial intelligence?)

⁹⁴ Ibid., 460.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 459.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

Human Agency

⁹⁷ Ibid., 456-7; Locke, II.xxi.31-42, vol. 1: 237-246.

⁹⁸ I John, cc. 3-5.

⁹⁹ Wesley, “The Doctrine of Original Sin, According to Scripture, Reason, and Experience, Part II” IX: 302.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., “Sermon XV. The Great Assize,” § II.7, V:176.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., “On Living Without God,” § 15, VII: 354.

¹⁰² Ibid., “Thoughts upon Necessity,” § III.1, X: 463-4.

¹⁰³ Steele, “*Gracious Affection*” and “*True Virtue*” According to Jonathan Edwards and John Wesley (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1994), 310-1.

¹⁰⁴ Wesley, “Thoughts upon Necessity,” § III.8, X: 468.

¹⁰⁵ Steele, 311.

¹⁰⁶ Wesley, “Thoughts upon Necessity,” § III.9, X: 468-9.

¹⁰⁷ Steele, 311.